THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) From time to time, the oil companies comes across cases of retail outlets/LPG distributorships suspected to be involved in benami operations. Such cases are investigated and action is taken against such dealerships in accordance with the dealership agreement.

Oil Marketing Companies have terminated 5 LPG distributors in Delhi which were found to be operated against the provisions of the distributorship agreement.

Pricing Policy of IBP

3200. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the IBP has decided to follow an independent pricing policy, different from those of Indian Oil Corporation;

(b) if so, to what extent Government have accepted the IBP's request for following independence in pricing policy; and

(c) the extent to which it will be beneficial for the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Reaction of LPG marketeers over LPG subsidy

3201. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private LPG marketeers have threatened to quit following Government's inability to implement policy regarding withdrawal of subsidy on LPG; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The private LPG marketeers have represented *inter-alia* on the issues relating to subsidy on domestic LPG, increase in excise duty, allowing private sector to sell subsidized LPG etc. The subsidy scheme for domestic LPG has not been finalised as yet.

Allocation of more gas to States

3202. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the growth rate of natural gas distribution and consumption marketed by the oil and gas companies, State-wise, particularly in Gujarat; and

(b) the measures being taken to provide more natural gas to the States, particularly to the backward areas in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The details are given in the Statement. (*see* below).

(b) Apart from increasing the availability of domestic gas by indigenous exploration and exploitation of fields, the Government have plans to import natural gas and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for supply to various consumers in the country including the State of Gujarat. Also, Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) has signed a Sale Purchase Agreement with M/s Ras Gas of Qatar for import of 5.0 million tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of LNG at Dahej Terminal in Gujarat for supply of re-gasified LNG to the potential consumers. The import of LNG is to commence in December, 2003 at Dahej Terminal.